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The Call *of* California

And Other Poems *of the* West

Francis Burton

THE CALL OF CALIFORNIA

And Other Poems
of the West

By
FRANCIS BORTON

—

FIFTH EDITION
Revised and Enlarged

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To Helen

THE CALL OF CALIFORNIA

And Other Poems of the West

By
FRANCIS BORTON

The Call of California

I HAVE wandered far away,
Many a long and weary day,
Through the scenes of which I dreamed in days of yore;
But I've turned at last to rest
In the land I love the best,
And it's California now,—forevermore,
On the margin of her shining, golden shore,
In the land of birds and blossoms,—evermore.

CHORUS

Oh! my California land,
Here I pledge my heart and hand,
For I love but you forever, love you true;
With the roses in your hair
And your lark-songs ev'ry where,
Underneath your dreamy skies of cloudless blue.

From your Missions, old and gray,
At the crimson close of day
I can hear the bells a-ringing, soft and low;
While the gay guitar of Spain
Lends a plaintive, sweet refrain
From the dim, romantic days of long ago,—
Long ago, long ago, long ago,
From the Padres and the Dons of long ago.

From Sierras, thunder-riven,
Shadowy peaks arise to heaven—
Hooded saints, whose names are benedicite;
From the cañon's purple rim
Downward rolls their matin hymn
Over golden-fruited valleys to the sea;
To the murm'ring pines beside the shining sea,
Till it mingles with the music of the sea.

In this sunny land of mine,
With its honey, oil and wine,
And its poppy fields aflame with living gold;
In this Eden of the earth
God is bringing to the birth
Greater wonders than He wrought in days of old;
In the bold days of old, the days of gold,
Than He fashioned through the Argonauts of old.

We have wealth upon the seas,
Health in every fragrant breeze,
  Rivers bursting from the mountain's
    cloven crest;
We have leagues of yellow grain—
Many a cattle-covered plain
  In this orange-blossom kingdom of the
    West,—
    In the free, unfettered, giant-hearted
      West,—
  'Neath the blue and golden banner of the
    West.

And it's where I want to be,
California's calling me
  Here to stay forever, never more to roam;
Calling me to come and rest
On her glowing, tawny breast,
  When her fields of bloom are like the
    billow's foam;
  Where the silv'ry olives whisper–welcome
    home;
  While along the hills the doves are call-
    ing—home.

At the Old Mission

THERE'S a sober hush in these solemn woods,
There's mystery in the air,
That seems to pour from the caves of death;
You can feel it everywhere.

A clear stream brawls through the piney dell,
Where the dove mourns all the day:
And the breeze dies down to a whisper here—
Where Padres used to pray.

The waters gush from the broken fount,—
But sadly, quietly now;
For gone are the monks who led them forth,—
The turf is green o'er their brow.

The lizard slides on the tottering walls,
That were once so brave and strong;
While the very birds, 'round these ruins gray,
Raise but a plaintive song.

The cells where brown Franciscans dwelt
Are ceiled with dank, dark moss;
So deeply the tooth of Time hath gone
We can scarcely find a cross!

The cross, the name and the date grow dim,
Only the faith remains:
The monk departs, but his faith endures
Through the years with their beating rains.

Seventeen hundred and something I find
In a cell half buried by leaves:—
A pine tree shoots from the knee-worn stones,
And you'd almost say it grieves.

The new must prevail—the old give place—
And yet—oh heart of mine—
There is something that speaks to me out of the Past,
When I stand at this ruined shrine,

That stirs my heart to its uttermost depths,
But the reason I do not know,
When I muse on these symbols of faith and love
From the years of long ago.

Here were gardens of flowers from far-off Spain,
The olive, the palm and the vine;
Where bees and butterflies find today
But sunlight's golden wine;

Here bells that clashed in the old gray towers;
And voices of prayer and praise:
Where brown hands wrought in glad content
In those dim, forgotten days.

All this—and more—that may never return,
While the tides march up and down;—
The cowl and the cord, and the sandal shoon
And the Padres' robes of brown.

But ever the best of it all shall bide,
While rains slant in from the sea;
The gentleness, kindness and patient faith
Live yet for you and me.

And long as the mercy of God shall pour
Our sea-fogs from His hands,
Will dreams and deeds of the "Mission days"
Be part of the lore of these lands.

Bodies and Souls

IN bridal raiment
Hand in hand
Before the priest
Of God they stand.

To melting glances
Mingling breath,
"Now are ye one,"
The good man saith.

Lips pressed to lips,
Warm heart to heart,
And yet how far
They stand apart.

Flesh knit to flesh,—
Not soul to soul,
Bridgeless billows
Between them roll.

Junipero Serra

WHEN weaklings feared and doubted,
While unfaith scoffed and flouted,
Thou still didst trust,
And in the dust,
Prone on thy face, didst pray,
Till, lo! the sudden ray
Of hope,—and ev'ry lip,
Rejoicing cried: "The ship!"
Deep in eternal granite be it graved
How, in that hour, was California saved.

✠ ✠ ✠

Junipero Serra sleeps today
By the mission walls at Carmel Bay;
His task well done, he takes his rest,
With thin hands crossed on his saintly
breast:
While brown hills welcome the winter rains,
Or lark songs ripple o'er poppied plains;—
His dreams and deeds in the days of old
Are part of the lore of our land of gold.

The West

ALONG our blue Sierra's wall,
No moldering castles rest;
But there the Redman's Thunder-bird
Hath built his lonely nest.

No hoary donjons, foul with crime,
Oppress the good, clean sod
Where live-oaks meet, with knotted arms,
The blazing bolts of God.

Instead of doubtful titles stamped
On pride's dim vellumed page,
The sullen grizzly here hath left
The claw marks of his rage.

No silken halls, no softness here,
No courtiers, false as hell;
But from the echoing granite gorge
The panther's deadly yell!

Here, laws unflattering, primal, harsh;
The desert's scorching breath;
Here, thorn, fang, claw and scalping knife–
The crimson trail of death!

And what are man-made kings and courts,
With cheap, brief honors set,
Where, in the red, raw clay of things,
God's thumb-prints yet are wet?

* * *

Amid these awful solitudes,
With skies so still and blue,
Are held such deadly, fierce debates
As minstrels never knew.

Here howling winds of ocean meet
The wild winds of the sky,
While vast, dim shapes from desert wastes
Their spirals wheel on high.

Cliff calls to cliff; th' avalanche
Replies in thunders loud,
While shafts of blinding lightning split
The swirling, inky cloud,

That bursts, and ploughs the mountains down
The salt plain's hissing sands,
Till fresh-torn cañon gulfs reveal
Earth's granite swaddling bands!

* * *

And here are men, sons of thy strength,
Oh, western land of mine,
Gay, tender, careless, swift and wild,
But upright as the pine.

Serene, clear-eyed, of Spartan speech,
The breed of men out here,
Who've trailed with hunger, thirst and death,
But never met with fear.

The wide, free winds are in their hearts,
The deep-voiced torrent's roar,

The solemn stillness of the woods,
Beside the lonely shore.

They need no finger-posts for faith;
No self-sure go-between;
They look God in the face and smile;
Their rugged hearts are clean.

They pluck the gray wolf from his den;
They tire the grizzly down,
Or peacefully their harvests reap
Along the foothills brown.

They beat the mountain into dust;
They burst its ribs apart;
Their laughter rings Homeric when
They clutch its golden heart!

Alone they win the chill, still heights,
By mountain sheep untrod;
They gaze abroad, they bare their brows
And shout, "Hurrah for God!"

Oh, little folk, who cringe and hedge,
Who cannot understand,
They tread a broader trail than yours
Across our Sunset Land,

Where man is kin to peak and star,
The wide plain's lonely space;
Where oft they ride so close to God
They meet Him—face to face!

Mt. Rubidoux at Dawn

THE mocking birds are singing in the
eucalyptus tops,
It's early in the morning, and the fog is
everywhere;
The sounds of nature's wakening come to us
tunefully
All softly muffled by the misty air.

The "cotton tails" are hopping in the barley
by the road;
Behind a bush the clucking quail are
bunched—about to fly;
The liquid, melting melody of joyous meadow
larks
Like silvery bubbles floats along the sky.
The "ragged robin" roses spill their nectar
on the grass
Before the robber bees, who love the sun,
are out of bed:
While drowsy poppies wait to pour libations
to their lord,
When in the East he rears his radiant
head.

The shimmering, emerald laces of the
queenly pepper tree
Are strewn with dewy pearls and fringed
with flakes of scarlet flame;
While the orange, dark and lustrous, in her
robes of green and gold,
Hath sent through all the earth this val-
ley's name.

The golden-dusted mustard pours its fragrance down the hill,
To where, in marshy tule beds, the noisy blackbirds throng:
The jangle of the cattle bells comes faintly from below
Where the lazy Santa Ana rolls along.

How sweet the button-sage's breath upon the quiet air;
How fresh and clean the odor from the haunting, whispering pines:
While, spread in wild profusion, where the gray old boulders cling,
The splendor of the morning-glory vines!

But now the fog is ebbing fast along Jurupa's hills,
As over San Jacinto gleam the banners of the sun:
Far up on foot-worn Rubidoux a shining cross appears,
The symbol that the earth's long night is done.

The Mission Inn

WITH its ivied walls and its cloistered halls
And a coolness and quietness all its own;
From its shady bowers to its tuneful towers
It's a fair dream fashioned in good gray stone;
With a high ideal everywhere,
With a fineness of sentiment in the air,
And music—that soothes like the soul of prayer.

There's bread and meat—for a man must eat—
But there's more than that to make one whole:
The builder's dream had a broader theme
In this caravansarai for the soul.
"*Sursum corda,*" we seem to hear
From good St. Francis, standing near,
"Lift up your hearts, and make good cheer."

The saints are gone, yet they still live on;
Still is their gentle influence felt;
From niche and nook they kindly look,
As when Junipero Serra knelt
And told to Indians swart and wild
The wondrous tale of the dear Christ-child—
And the love of Mary, the mother mild.

When the day grows dim, and the vesper hymn

So tunefully sounds in the silvery chimes,
I seem to hear—far away and clear—
Voices that speak from the olden times:
Of sacrifice, better than gold or fame,
Of love that burned like a fragrant flame—
Till my selfish heart is faint for shame.

Not for me alone is this sermon in stone,
Nor only to me do these mute things speak:
Full many a heart has received its part,
The quiet tear glistened on many a cheek;
Many a pilgrim has paused to say:
"I'm glad my heart ever found the way
To the Mission Inn at the close of day."

Down the Grade with "Bob"

(1874)

WE'VE topped the grade, now for the other side;
Sling the buckskin in 'em—let 'er slide.

We're full of 'Frisco folks and tenderfeet
That wants some early stagin'—here's their treat.

Straighten them tugs—don't let 'em drag the dust—
Hi there! you trottin' pinto, lope er bust.

A bunch of broncs, and hellions every one–
Hoop-la, git out–fergit yer shoulder's skun.

Oh we're all right: my lady, dry yer tears,
Sit down, my lord, and chase away yer fears;

The road is twelve feet wide from bluff to ledge
With manzaniller strung along the edge.

Why, man alive, a Chinymun at night
Could strike the trail here—why it's out o' sight!

Git out o' here—you leaders, switch yer tails,
Yer haulin' Uncle Sammy's sacred mails;

Stretch them there traces, limber up yer heels,
No moseyin' er I'll show you how it feels.

No bitin' now—you lop-eared antelope—
You old kyoty—bust it down the slope;

Jump through them collars—hump yer backs 'n git—
You haven't turned a hair—now chaw the bit.

Thanks, stranger, yes,—I surely guess I could
Smoke a cigar—gimme a light—that's good;

There haint no tin-foil cabbage leaves to that—
A Mexican cigar—I'll bet my hat!

You see, I used tuh run 'em through, you know
Over the Rio Grande from Mexico,

Some years before that old wheel plug was born—
But here's our hangout—Gabriel toot yer horn;

Grubstake Junction, where they'll treat you white,
The bar-room's blazin'—strangers, will you light?

The Road by Panama

THE old road, the gold road, the road by Panama,
As lurid, ghastly as the path that Dante dimly saw,
Hemmed about by nameless terrors, haunted by alarms,—
The ghosts of treasure-seekers spent, of spectral men-at-arms.
A narrow way and rugged, wild, where jungle shadows spread
O'er many a bubbling, slimy pool and hideous blotch of red.
Amid its ooze the rotting bones of famished Spanish mules,
The grinning skulls of picaroons and fortune's cheated fools.
The venomed snake, the vulture keen, the deadly fly are there,
And fetid heaps whose breath is death upon the sickly air.

* * *

Along the hot, dark forest aisles again we seem to hear
The rush of feet, the clash of blades, the hoarse-voiced buccaneer,
The whistle of the slaver's whip, the screams of tortured men,
Who sink beneath the bloody lash to never rise again;
The silver-laden, grunting mules, with plunder from Peru,

The shouts of conquering Cortez' men, of
Drake and Morgan's crew;
Pizarro's Spaniards, haggard, weak, with
fear in every eye,
Who may not stay nor sleep for ever "on-
ward" is the cry;
Who fear the gloom where glows the
hounded Indian's sleepless hate,
Where mutilated galley-slaves like panthers
lie in wait;—
And so full oft they cross themselves, to
stout San Yago pray,
As on they urge with curses foul through
the hot, weary way,
Hugging tight their hard-won spoils and
fainting with desire
To tread the streets of Panama and lap its
liquid fire;
Where painted harpies watch for them, with
baleful eyes and bold,
To strip them clean with iron claws and
leave them stark and cold.

* * *

Oh! the old road, the gold road, the road by
Panama,
A rosary of every crime, where lawlessness
was law,
Where harvestings of piracies on sea and
land went by,—
Thrice cursed treasure black with groans
and ravished women's cry;
The minted sweat and blood of branded,
scarred, Peruvian slaves,

The riflings of their temples, yea, the winnowings of their graves!

* * *

And later, by this wild highway, with dauntless hearts aflame,
The boisterous, bearded Argonauts from California came;
In motley rags with belts and bags of unstained virgin ore
Stripped from the shining, granite ribs of Eldorado's shore!

* * *

Aye, many a golden trickle ran, through many a fearful year
To swell the rich Pactolus tide of this Hell's gullet here.
But all is hushed and quiet now: they passed and left no trace,
And in the solemn forest shade no eye may mark their place.
They dreamed their dream, they wrought their deed of valor or of shame,
To share alike, some few brief years, an infamy of fame!

Mexico

SHE is circled with lakes, she is shadowed by mountains,
Snow-mantled, pine-plumed, under-girded with flame;
She is young, she is old as her sister of Egypt,
She is ever, forever, yet never the same.

Fresh is her cheek as her green curving valleys,
Care free her heart as her brown babes at rest;
Bright are her hopes as the eyes of her daughters,
Her passion as fierce as her storms from the West.

Her story as sad as the gloom of her "northers,"
Her struggle as epic as ever was told;
Her heroes are laureled in valor's Valhalla,
With coronals woven of nopal and gold.

Oh, Mexico! heiress of cycles of sorrow,
Of jungle-grown hieroglyphs, meaningless now,
Of histories, cities, dumb, buried forever,
Of mysteries dark as the runes on thy brow.

Glorious with rare carven gems from the ages,
Waiting the wonderful years yet to be,
Clasping thy brown hand we hail thee, our sister,
Thou queen, silver throned by thine opalesque sea.

The Land of the Arriero

WHERE valleys are deep and mountains are high
And the mule-track hangs like a streak in the sky,—
Like a vulture's path through the thin, still air
Far over the "hot lands," shimmering there;
Where afar and faintly the music swells
Of quick-stepping, grey mules' silvery bells;
Where pine trees yield to the pine-apple's gold
And billows of bloom o'er the earth are rolled;
Where the trees drip honey, the sod sweats death
And sucks out your life with its vampire breath;
Where the warm, green heart of that lotus land
Gives all with a care-free, generous hand,—
'Tis there that the gay arriero's found,
Where he takes his ease on his own home ground.

Where cataracts thunder, the parrots scream,
And gorgeous, wonderful butterflies gleam,
While marvelous birds in their glowing wings
Wear the royal splendors of Aztec kings;
Where the wild orange drops its acrid fruit
Near the strangled, writhing *ceiba's* root;
Where the hiss is heard of the spotted snake

As iguanas slide through the bamboo brake;
Where the tapir crunches the river reeds
And the jaguar leaps as the red deer feeds;
And the *cayman* basks on the sun-baked bar,
While life, as you knew it, seems dim and far;—
From there do the swart arrieros come,—
To those mystical beauties blind and dumb.

They laden their mules with rich, fragrant freights:
Coffee, vanilla, fruits, parrots in crates,
Sugar, tobacco, raw liquor in casks,
A mouthful of which arriero asks
To lighten his heart up the steep, rough road,
'Neath the scorching sun and the heavy load.

Lithe as a *tigre* and tireless of limb,
Clean moulded in bronze, ev'ry inch of him,
Son of the sunland, gay, careless and wild,
Aztec, fierce, passionate, nature's own child,
His thirty stout mules upward grunting go
Over the narrow trail, steady and slow;
Snuffing the pathway that clings to the edge
Of the sheer down-dropping, slippery ledge;
The trail that was known to Cortez of old
Who dreamed of dim valleys paven with gold,
While crushing the land 'neath his iron-shod heel
When the red years rang to the clash of steel!

How silvery sweet ring the mule-bells there,
When the dew yet freshens the morning air!

How merrily sound the songs of the South,
As carelessly flung from the muleteer's mouth:
Songs of the soil, of the heart, of the sun,
Of *dulce amor* or *partida* won,
With many a sighing and *ay de mi*,
In the high-pitched, Mexican nasal key!

He's a good *paisano*, I know him well,
He hopes there's a heaven, is sure there's a hell,
Trusts in the *padre*, remembers to pray
To the blessed saints in his own blind way,
And slaves for his *amo* for scanty pay.
He climbs the wild mountains in sun or shower
And cares for his mules in the darkest hour;
His * *amo* would grieve for an injured mule,
As for him, why, he is only a fool,
Like a simple hero of low degree
He dies for his charge if need there be
And returns to his palm-thatched hut no more
Where his brown babes roll on the cool, dirt floor.

* "Amo," boss.

A Thunder Storm in Puebla

FROM morning prayer until mid-afternoon
The August sun has scorched us to a swoon;
The languid flowers droop, the pepper trees
Respond but feebly to the faint, hot breeze.

The brown hills are a quiver with the heat:
Hugging the scanty shade of every street
The dogs slink by too spent to scratch or bark;
Awhile the beggars cease their whine, when hark,—
Down from the mountain rolls a long, deep roar
And wise "Poblanos" shut and bar the door.

In thrice three credos old Malinche's brow
Is swirled in ebon darkness, where but now
The southern sun poured down a flood of gold
O'er shattered crag and wrinkled lava fold.

With tropic fierceness falls th' onrushing gloom,
Swiftly the bright day yields its virgin bloom
To the marauder, thunder-browed, whose power
Swells black to heav'n in this tempestuous hour.
Now latch the shutters, chain the heavy door,
Call to the Virgin, all the saints implore

As shouting winds and lightning's crooked
prong
Urge the slow-footed, bellowing clouds along.

Jesús, Maria, hearken to the rain
Flooding the patio while on every pane
The hailstones beat the very fiend's tatoo,
And every dust-clogged water-spout a-spew!
Most Blessed Virgin, we confess our faults,
(Maria, vida mia, bring my salts),
Where is Francisco, lazy lout, to burn
The blessed palm leaves in the incense urn?

No time for chatter now, nor idle talk,
When sulphur-breathing demons near us
walk,
"Sweet Guadalupe, help us all today,
To thee we *pobres pecadores* pray."

Then suddenly, in one long, furious blast,
Of lightning, thunder, hail, the storm has
passed.
The sun appears, and in the western skies
The rainbow path that slopes to Paradise!

Gone are the dolour, darkness, and the gloom,
Gone every thought of an unwelcome tomb:
Vaya, mi alma, now the storm is o'er,
Bid the *portero* haste, unbar the door,
Blow out the candles, we shall not be late,
The *tandas* won't begin till half-past eight.

Taking the Veil (Mexico)

WITH unbound hair and brown feet bare,
A taper in her hands,
Within the gloomy convent church
A dark-eyed maiden stands,

All corpse-like in a clinging shroud,
A cross upon her breast,—
The hour hath come to bid farewell
To all she loveth best.

Her virgin heart is dry as dust,
Her face is like the dead;
The church hath laid its withering touch
Upon her fair young head.

Her thin hand wears a golden band,—
The mystic wedding ring
That seals her as the spouse of Christ,
Her Lover, Bridegroom, King.

The air is heavy, damp and cold,
The candles dimly gleam
While priests about the altar go
Like figures in a dream.

They chant the service for the dead,
For her so wan and still,
With *Kyrie eleison*
From boyish voices shrill.

O! hapless maid, deceived, betrayed,
The victim of a vow,

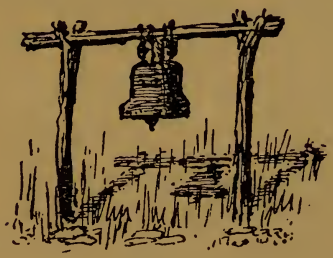
To wither in a living death,
  Like Jephtha's daughter now!

No lover's kiss, no mother's bliss
  Her frozen heart may know,
Within the convent's coffin walls
  Through years of dumb-lipped woe.

No more on earth may she behold
  Each well-beloved face;
No more the circle of the home
  Shall hold for her a place;

All, all, upon the altar there
  Hath now been sacrificed,
And so farewell to life and love,
  Farewell, thou bride of Christ.

One last wild look at love and life,
  One shriek,—and that is all,
A doleful bell rings like a knell,
  The sable curtains fall.



Old House in Puebla, Mexico

THREE hundred years are in these walls,
These iron-bound doors of oak,
Whose rugged strength has oft withstood
Sir Robber's shrewdest stroke.

The knocker wears a demon's head,—
Jesu, and well-away;
A goatish devil, bearded, horned,
Let him who knocketh pray

To where above, in battered niche,
The good St. Francis stands,
Marked Christwise in his blessed feet
And in his loving hands.

The Moorish front is gay with tiles
Of yellow, green and blue,
Inwrought in cunning, quaint designs
As ancient craftsmen knew.

Rude gargoyles grin from jutting eaves,
A spout of hammered lead
Shoots the flat roof's flood to the street
Through gaping lion's head.

Above the door an ancient crest,
Carved in the old grey stone:—
A tiger couched, a helmet barred,
A fist that grips its own!

They say the house is haunted, cursed,
And show a bloody stain

Linked with a tale of love and gold
From the old Spanish Main.

Great spiders lurk in corners dim,
Foul bats breed in the wall;
At night, when worm-gnawed timbers creak,
Faint whispers fill the hall,

From lips of dust, from love betrayed,
From woman's vengeful heart,
Whose clinging curse from these old stones
May nevermore depart.

A Mexican Beggar

BECAUSE he was so old, deformed and poor,
Because he bent so meekly his hoar head,
Because he bore the dignity of sorrow
As some king begging in a beggar's guise,
Because he was so thankful for the trifle
Carelessly tossed him from my surplus store:—
Because of his bare feet and tattered rags—
His thin grey locks and utter misery,
I rested but uneasily that night,
Dreaming of Dives, Lazarus and their lesson,
Of creed and church, of apostolic faith,
Of orthodox confessions and professions—
Strange a street beggar should disturb me so!

A Glimpse of Mexico at Home

THE windows frown with heavy bars of iron;
The great *zaguan* is like some castle door,
Spiked, bolted, chained and solid as the wall,
With quaint bronze knocker o'er the wicket hung.

For there were times, whose mem'ry still is fresh,
When great need was of such stout doors as these,—
When bold Sir Robber, loud-voiced, sword in hand,
Knocked not so gently as we knock today.

Three centuries are seen in this *zaguan*
Of evolution, liberty and law;
And twenty centuries are in the cry
Of the *portero*, fumbling at the bar,
Who calls *quien es?* before he slips the chain,
As porters in the dim days of the Christ.

Yo Soy, we cry,—the old man hears and knows
The accents of his *patron's* welcome voice.
Drops the huge chain, slides back the bar, and we
Are in the *patio* of a Mexic home!

Coolness and rest; a fountain in the midst,
Decked with quaint carvings, murmurs drowsily;
The solid, whitened arches all about,
Have brought us to the ancient Moorish Spain,
Shutting us from the modern world outside,
Into the home life of Cid Campeador!

Flowers ev'rywhere, in Talavera pots,
In shattered *ollas*, broken sugar moulds,
While orchids, cactus, bloom in great ox horns
Hung from rude spikes thrust in the old stone wall.

Chatter of women 'round the plashing fount,
Brown, shirtless *ninos* creeping in the sun;
And over all, laughter and glad content,—
Happy, though poor, these simple Mexicans.

Within the house we find the constant lamp
Of turnip oil before the Virgin placed,—
Sweet symbol of a faith that will not die;
Chromos of hell and heaven, angels, fiends,
The good man borne to glory, while foul devils
All hoofed and horned, bear the bold sinner hence,
To red hell shrieking,—all in vivid hues,—
No place for "higher criticism" there.

One almanac hangs open on the wall
To mark the saint's days of the mother church;

Rude charcoal burners from the pine-clad slopes
Of dark Malinche, farmers, artisans,
The rich and poor, all guard the "holy days,"
And even butchers close their reeking stalls.

You cannot know, you cannot understand
You careless tourist from the outside world,
You do not, cannot feel the inner life
That throbs in Mexico, the guide-books fail,
They may not give the "open sesame:—"

The patios where crystal fountains drip,
Where women gossip when the air is cool,
The courtesy, the kindness, filial love
That links the home hearts here in Mexico.

From polished hoop the parrot swings and screams
In fluent Spanish all the drowsy day;
The *lavanderas* swash their clothes near by
Where brown babes crawl, in naked comfort free,—
"Race suicide," a thing undreamed of here!

Compadres and *comadres*, wrinkled, grey,
Still use the customs of old Abram's time,
Poetic, patriarchal,—poured round all
The silver melody of Spanish speech!

Servants grown old in service of their friend,
Their lord and *amo*, master of their lives
Who serve for love and the sweet "niño's" sake,—
Faithful till death,—there are such servants here.

And over all this inner life of ours
In rippling waves, a heart-born laughter flows,
A simple happiness and sweet content.
How much there is that money cannot buy,
That may be found here in this ancient land;
Things the heart hungers for, the pearls of faith,
Strange, but you'll find them with these Mexicans;

But not for sale, nor saleable for such
Are the choice fruits of simple lives that hold
Fast to the principles our fathers knew,
When they were glad and grateful in their day
For rain and sunshine, harvest and a home,
And sweet babes growing heav'nward from the hearth,—
Yea, such things may be found in Mexico!

In the Days of the Buccaneers

WHERE Palo Verde broods above
The never quiet waves,
That burst in thunder far within
Her pearl-enameled caves,
Alone, upon the sea-birds' ledge
That overhangs the bay,
I watch the fleet of fishers creeping
Catalina way;
The lumber schooners warping in,
All redolent of pine,
The deep-sea freighters at their docks
Where donkey-engines whine;
I trace the sea-wall's shelt'ring arm
That holds the harbor light
To cheer the channel coasters through
The wild Southeaster's night,
And, while the shining steamers pass
Like shuttles to and fro,
Before my eyes there seem to rise
The days of long ago.
Seen through the veil of vanished years
How dim and far they seem,—
The treasure ship, the pirate's gold,—
A half remembered dream!

THE GALLEON

Beyond the bay, Manila bound,
I see the galleon go,
Deep laden with her silver spoil
From mines in Mexico.

Her fat hull lined with dye-woods, gums,
  Rude bales of wrinkled hides,
Pearls, ginseng, crimson cochineal
  And bezoar stones besides.

Athwart the high, embattled poop
  Her stately name unrolled,—
"La Trinidad Santisima,"
  In carven scrolls of gold.

Her culv'rins huge, of Moorish bronze,
  Each duly named and blessed,
Reveal th' armourer's utmost art,—
  On each the royal crest,

High overhead, with Cross blood-red,
  The banner of Castile,
While clad in shining Milan mail
  From haughty head to heel,

The blue-veined Don looks proudly down
  Along her castled walls,
Silent save when to ear-ringed men
  His silver trumpet calls.

The crew, right sturdy villains all,
  By dreams of plunder led;
Bound turban wise with gaudy scarves
  Each scarred, ferocious head.

While mingled with them friars grey,
  Who deem the world but dross,
So might they bear to heathen lands
  The mystery of the Cross.

With glorious eyes of Andaluz
  And rippling, ebon hair
A grieving daughter bends beside
  Her gray-beard father there

And stares as one distraught upon
  The cold and cruel sea,
Or breathes soft prayers to pitying saints
  With many an *ay de mi!*

Sweet Jesus, will she see once more
  Her sun-bright Spanish home
Beyond the fields of bitter brine,
  The weary leagues of foam?

Don Captain Vasco de Guzman,
  A valiant Spaniard he,
Who fears not any shape that haunts
  The vast, mysterious sea:

The hippocamp with leathern wings,
  The serpent-headed whale,
The fearful kraken, slimy, huge,
  With scales like brazen mail;

Whose writhing arms suck down the ships
  Swirled in an inky tide:—
The crested dragons spouting flame
  On whom the mermen ride:—

When sandaled pilgrims, whisp'ring tell
  Of such foul worms as these,
That rear aloft their hideous heads
  In strange, uncharted seas,

With swelling Spanish oaths the Don
  Will stun the doubting ear,—
How all such scurvy cattle he
  Has seen, but cannot fear;

Not them, nor all the roaring fiends
  Astride the tempest's blast:—
For why,—he hath a holy bone
  Safe bedded in the mast!

A gracious bone, most potent, rare,
  From good San Yago's shrine,—
The foul fiend's self dare not draw near
  Where that sweet bone doth shine!

Yet one there was whose dreaded name
  Could chill the Don with fear:—
Bill Hawkins, heretic accursed,
  The English buccaneer!

The picture shifts, the galleon's gone,
  Through mists of silver spray
And now the wolfish pirate ship
  Comes snuffing up the bay.

THE PIRATES

For long, long years the Silver Seas
  That name of terror knew,—
Bill Hawkins, monster, merciless,
  And his ferocious crew

Of crop-eared knaves, scarred galley slaves,
  And rogues with branded hands,
Gaol fruit to weight the gallows tree,—
  Swept up in many lands.

From Maracaibo to Peru,
  From Vera Cruz to Spain
Their crimson crimes unnameable
  Had left a bloody train,

Each scuttled ship a blazing tomb
  With ne'er a breath of life;—
One swift grim law for all,—the plank,
  Rope, pistol, pike or knife!

With wolfish eyes they share the prize,
  With many a murderous blow;—
The jolly Roger overhead,
  The ghastly decks below;

They broach the rum, the fiddlers come,
  Around and 'round they reel;
They've diced with Death, the game is theirs,
  With a dead man at the wheel!

And while their hellish revelry
  Affronts the quiet skies
They're off again for Port o' Spain
  And some fat galleon prize.

So grew their glittering, golden spoil
  But ah, the shrieks and tears,
The gurgling groans that blackened it
  Through wild, crime-crusted years;

That treasure wrung from bursting hearts,
  From pallid hands of woe,
By tortures sharp and exquisite
  As only devils know.

But when at last the lion's paw
  Upon Bill Hawkins fell
The bulk of their huge hoard was gone
  And where,—no man could tell.

In clanking chains they hung him high
  At Execution Dock.
Yet to the end he snapped and cursed,
  His heart like any rock.

He would not tell, nor ever told,
  He left no faintest clew,
No map nor scrap to guide the greed
  Of his rapacious crew,

Who searched in vain through all their haunts,
  On many a shining shore,
By cave and cliff, by tree and tower
  A twelve months' space or more.

By rum and riot some were slain,
  And some by foul disease,
Some rotted in the festering slime
  Of dungeons overseas;

Upon the rack some howled their last,
  Too few the gibbet bore;
To open sea the rest won free,
  And there an oath they swore,

To seek far off in Western seas
  Bill Hawkin's hidden lair
For black-faced Anak in a dream
  Had seen the treasure there!

Then Westward Ho! away they go,
  They cross the Silver Seas
Whose coral islands oft had known
  Their merry devilries.

On, on they sail till warm winds fail,
  They curse the ice and snow:
Again the black man dreams his dream,
  And onward aye they go.

Around the utmost icy cape
  They wrestle with the blast;
Then shift their sails to milder gales
  And trust the worst is past.

They sight Peru, "Spain's treasure chest,"—
  The land Pizarro won,
(It's jeweled temples paved with gold),
  From Incas of the sun.

Like grinning wolves that near the prey
  They urge the ship along;
The rum beside the mast all day,
  All night the rover's song.

Now clear and cold like silver spires
  The peaks of Mexico
Where Cortez found a Spanish cure
  For Montezuma's woe;

And found withal such shining pearls,
  Such emerald stones and gold,
That every pirate sucks his cheeks
  Whene'er the tale is told.

Through windless seas of sodden grass
Most evilly they fare,
Till sails with rotting mold are green
As any mermaid's hair,
Till Hawkins and his gold they curse
And curse each other there.

Then California's golden shore
With wondering joy they view,
The friendly Indian's flashing oar
Beside his swift canoe;

The fair green hills whose silver rills
Run singing to the sea
Through fragrant meadows bright with bloom
And wild bird's minstrelsy.

His dream holds yet, the signs are met,
Black Anak grins with glee;
Lo! on the right St. Peter's cove,
St. Catharine on the lee.

Down come the sails, the anchor plumps,
The rum goes gaily 'round,
Were never men more fain to see
Their shadows on the ground!

With panting strokes they win the beach,
Th' Ethiop leads the way:
Their hot breaths whistle at his back,
His thick lips seem to pray.

Now here, now there, they search and swear,
God, how they ramp and rave;
Have they been diddled by a dream,—
Then Christ that black man save!

With frenzied hands they hurl the sands,
  Rocks, shells and vines apart,
In every eye the lust for gold,
  Murder in each foul heart.

At last their streaming toil unstops
  A huge, black yawning hole;
So murky, deep and deadly cold
  That fear grips every soul;

But not for long,—they strike a flint
  The spark leaps out and there
They eye the ghastly proofs that mark
  Bill Hawkin's secret lair!

A shattered skull, a rusted blade,
  A shapeless pile of bones,—
At which some spat and crossed themselves
  And spake in milder tones:

Then swore more foully, passed the rum,
  Thrust forth a torch and saw
What they had scourged the seas to gain
  And broken every law.

Deep sunken in the cavern's mold
  The smoking lights reveal
An ancient chest of Spanish oak
  With bands and bolts of steel;

Upon whose cover, red with rust,
  Some dim device is seen;
A Latin scrawl, a helmet plumed,
  With ramping beasts between;

At sight of which the gloomy vault
  Resounds with oaths and cheers,—
Forgotten then their scars and wounds
  Their hunger, cold and fears.

Leaps forth the dreamer Anak then
  With hoarse unhuman yell—
A tongueless eunuch huge and black,—
  Tusked like a fiend from Hell,

Heaves up a mighty bowlder there,
  Bursts oak and steel in twain
And lo! the long sought glittering hoard,
  Culled from the Spanish Main!

THE TREASURE

They do not dream, the torches gleam
  On gold and jewels there;
Such gems as high-born Spanish dames
  On cold, proud bosoms wear;

Sequins, pistoles, broad gold doubloons,
  Dull burnished silver bars,
Carbuncles, emeralds, diamonds bright
  That sparkle like the stars;

Pieces of eight, rich silver plate,
  Fair pearls like shining tears,
With many a dainty trinket torn
  From shrieking beauty's ears;

Brave rings with fingers in them yet,
  All fleshless, black and dried,—
A grisly harvest, cutlass reaped
  From blue-veined hands of pride;

Bejeweled blades of damascene
From Spain's dark, bloody sod
And great rose rubies, once the eyes
Of some tusked, snouted god;

Gilt crucifixes, candlesticks,
Basons of beaten gold
And chalices with diamond studs
Lapped in a cloudy fold
Of laces wrought by pallid nuns
In Spanish convents cold.

With furious haste such splendid spoil
They heap together there
Would buy thrones, virtues, souls of men,—
St. Peter's ivory chair!

Yet when each one his share surveys
It shows so mean and small,
In every envious heart is hatched
The will to win it all.

Greed shows its hissing, venomed head,
Bursts forth each ancient hate;
Not one can meet another's eye
Nor trust his trusted mate.

Like wolves they snarl, like foul fiends roar
Around that gloomy cave,
Nor hear the whistling wind without,
Nor heed the lapping wave.

Each tears his fellow's cursing throat
Each lunging blade is red;
Till 'round that mocking treasure lie
But dying men or dead.

In crimson pools that slowly creep
  Along the trampled mire
A little space the torches hiss
  Like serpents ringed with fire;

Then darkness seals each staring eye
  In that unhallowed grave,—
Their requiem but the wailing wind,
  The moaning of the wave.

Awhile the keen-eyed buzzard wheels
  Above the cavern's door,
And horny crabs slide in and out
  Across the fetid floor;

The gaunt coyote snuffing comes
  Then softly slinks away,
While slowly rots the pirate ship
  Upon the lonely bay.

The years slip by, then comes a day,
  Tense, boding, hot and still,
No sound is heard from beast or bird
  Along the hazy hill;

In whirls of dust the dry leaves dance
  Beside the listening shore,—
How shrunk with fear the sea-bird's cry,
  How loud the ocean's roar!

Then suddenly the wooded hills
  The earth's firm pillars rock
And shuddering peaks as in a fit
  Their knees together knock;

The ancient cliffs plunge in the deep,
A thousand thunders sound,—
Till where the sea-fowl fed her young
But boiling waves are found!

Gone is the pirate's cave, their gold
Is scattered far and wide
Along the careless ocean's floor
The sport of every tide.

Some little time their polished bones
Are strewn along the shore
Then from the memory of man
They pass for evermore.

Calvary

WHEN our dear Lord in deadly sorrow bound
Shed blood and water from his heart's deep wound,
A little lad stood, boy like in the shade—
By the rude Cross and Royal Victim made—
And whirled his toy around in thoughtless glee
Not knowing Him who bled for you and me:
A bird sprang twittering from the grassless sod
And perched upon the Tree that bore our God,
Singing its sweet song to the fading day
While Jesus' heart blood dripped full fast away.

Old Mexico

OLD Mexico of the long ago,
Land of the silver rills,
The vanished centuries linger yet
Amid thy foot-worn hills.

From thy snows and pines, thy dark, deep mines,
Down to thy tropic sea
There is never a thing a man might ask
That may not be found in thee!

Silver and gold in thy ridges rolled,
Health from thy snow-capped peaks,
Beautiful women with flashing eyes
And sun-kissed olive cheeks;

Culture that comes from the Spanish Moors
Of a thousand years ago;
And customs that come from the yellow East
But how—no man may know.

Faces as fair as ever were seen
In any rose gardens of earth;
And the slant-eyed, squat-nosed Mongol breed,—
What land first saw their birth?

Hieroglyphs older than Norsemen's runes,—
Palaces ancient as Tyre,
Where the smiling child of the sun today
Bakes his corn-cakes on the fire.

Romance and mystery over it all,
Mystery always and ever,
Old as the eldest of Egypt's gods,—
Will the light come ever, never?

The Death Pool at La Brea

No song birds hover about its edge,
Where sad winds sigh through the stiff, brown sedge;
No fleet wings brush with a wild bird's grace
The sullen tide of the Death Pool's face.

But ever it lies there still and cold,
Wickedly waiting, and old—so old;
Chilling the warmth of the genial sky
Like a Gorgon's face with its lidless eye,
The haunt of horror, a place of fear,
Through many a dumb, unnumbered year.

Up from the cold, dark chambers of death
Oozes its pestilent, bubbling breath;
Wrapped in the folds of its stiffened slime,
The bones of monarchs of ancient time—
Of huge, strange creatures of monstrous girth,
Lords of the primitive manless earth!

What secrets locked in that deep, dark grave,
What wonders hid 'neath the thick, black wave,
What dreadful shapes here have mirrored been
That never by human eye were seen!
When, under the old, old primal law
Of bloody muzzle and crimson claw,
The saber-tooth and the great cave-bear
Tore the trumpeting mastodon there;
While green-eyed dragons with leathern wings
Screamed o'er the strife of the jungle kings.

"Mangos de Manila"

"MANGOS de Manila"—
Hark to the mellow call,
"Mangos de Manila,"
Most luscious fruit of all.

"Mangos de Ma-nee-la"—
I stop him in the shade,
The Aztec, brown "frutero,"
And soon the sale is made.

"Son muy dulces, jefe,"
Is what he says to me,
"They're very sweet and juicy"—
The truth we soon shall see.

No mango forks are handy,
So peel them with your knife;
Say, stranger, did you ever
Eat better in your life?

The slippery fruit a-dropping
Great gouts of liquid gold:—
Just shut your eyes and swallow
And dream of days of old.

You hear the fountain tinkling,
A strange speech meets your ear,
The mango on your palate
Brings it all to you here.

It somehow draws you nearer
To India and the East

To Afric's tawny jungles
A thousand years at least.

"Mangos de Manila,"
A golden link to all
Of good Haroun-al-Raschid,
And muezzin's plaintive call,—

Arabian Nights and hasheesh,
With all our childhood knew
Of tales from land of faery
Broidered with gold and blue.

The harem's marble lattice,
Where musky south winds sigh
In "Mangos de Ma-nee-la"
Our swart frutero's cry.

Grief

AT a sunken lake's edge in the dreary night,
In a cypress silvered by the dead moon's light,
With rain-chilled nest and heart all desolate,
A widowed dove sits, mourning for her mate.

Kismet

'TWAS Kismet that ever I knew him;
'Twas Kismet that first drew me to him,
And for Kismet I loved him and slew him!

A Norther in Veracruz

WHEN the bluff and boisterous North Wind
Comes to woo the Sunny South
And a thousand roaring thunders
Are the kisses of his mouth;

When the sea birds seek a shelter
In some battered, splintered rock
And the walls of Juan Ullua
Tremble 'neath the surge's shock;

When the sails are blown to tatters,
Timbers start in every joint,
And the grey, bare-headed helmsman
"Holds her down another point,"

When the booming winds of heaven
Heap the surges o'er the deck
And the tiger leaping lightnings
Show the crushed and battered wreck;

When the shark-toothed reefs are grinning,
Waiting for their wounded prey;
As the seething, rushing waters
Urge the doomed ships down the bay;

When the demons of the ocean
Grip the goblins of the sky
And the devils to the landward
Fling their sandy arms on high;

When the rain like Mauser bullets
Hisses from the inky gloom;

And the "Pale Horse," Death bestridden,
  Gallops where the breakers boom;

When the sailors pray the Virgin,
  And the captain makes a vow,
And the fisher boats are scudding
  Anywhere and anyhow;

When amid the Gulf's wild fury
  And the screams from whitened lips
Coral reefs are ground to powder
  As they grind the groaning ships;

When the devil takes the tiller
  And his demons rule the deck
And the ooze from bloody corpses
  Streams and reddens o'er the wreck;

When each skipper out to seaward
  Trembles in his sodden shoes
Then you know we have a "Norther,"
  Southward here in Veracruz.

At the Ruins of Mitla

A MOURNFUL hollow in the old grey hills
Where never a bird its glad sweet music trills,
We shiver in the sunlight for a spell
Still broods o'er Mictlan,—gloomy mouth of Hell!

The narrow streamlet as of old runs on,
But they who built these palaces are gone;
They came, they went nor left one word behind,
We search and dig but only questions find.

The air is chill with voices of the dead,
But not a word we catch of all they said;—
That slant-eyed, squat-hipped folk of ancient day,
Long since returned to primal dust and clay.

We bow our heads to pass the temple door
Where the plumed high-priest strode erect before;
Each monolith still fitted to its groove
Which time nor earthquake one hair's breadth could move.

A pigmy race of men of mighty dreams
Reared these quaint carven walls, these ponderous beams,
Wrought patiently in tireless feeble strength

Till the huge capstone lay in place at length,
Showing through all the centuries it should last
How here some nameless Indian Angelo passed.

* * *

Glad that we came, we gladly turn away
Back to the wholesome breath of living day;
The long whip cracks, the creaking coach appears
To bear us from these ghosts of weird, wan years.

In the Cathedral Towers at Dawn

IN the cathedral towers I stand at dawn,
The slumber breaking bells have but begun
Their silver clashing and the dallying day
Comes slowly traveling upward from the sea.

Beneath me all the streets are half astir
With pious life,—servants and served alike,
Close hooded from the sharp insidious air
Bend churchward, heavenward, by a weary way,
Thorn set, tear wet, by sin and sorrow urged.
Below there toil-worn mothers faint and wan

Suckling at withered breasts their puny
babes;
And street-worn men with poverty their
bride,
Wake foodless in this city of the sun:
While others, sons of Fortune's fickle smile,
Who never toiled nor hungered, calmly sleep
And over all the mercy of our God!

Merrily ring the great Cathedral bells
Over the life-sick multitude below;
No voice for them calling from airy steeps
Of heights celestial, bidding them return
Out, onward, forward, upward to their God.

O'erhead the beauty of the morning stars
Down there the endless misery of man!
The fresh winds blow from out the great salt
sea
And down from scarped and thunder riven
peaks
But not for them, nor any voice of morn
Comes caroling from dewy meadow grass.

Alone and poor, poor and alone they live
Hopeless and songless in this bright sun-
land,
And die at last sad-faced and hollow-eyed
Mantled in Misery. Brethren, pray for such.

Titian's "Entombment of Christ"

(Tzintzuntzan)

IN old grey church all full of other years,
With knee-worn pavement stained by bitter tears;
Sunlight without but graveyard gloom within
The house where God forgives His children's sin.

A charnel odor loads the still, cold air
As if the spirits of the dead were there,
Until awe-stricken by the half-lit gloom
We shudder as though shut within a tomb!

But suddenly a window opens wide,
And afternoon pours in its golden tide
Showing us there upon the old stone wall
Of Titian's genius masterpiece of all.

A pallid Christ all mutely tombward borne
By faithful hearts so dumb and sorrow-torn,
A few disciples there, by fear late driven—
A Magdalene and Mother—anguish riven.

O! pallid Christ, bruised by the Cross and Thorn,
O! faithful hearts, no longer may ye mourn,
The dear Lord sleepeth, soon to wake again
And set His kingdom in the hearts of men!

Old Cal Beaver

IF yuh listen to my ditty I would have
yuh fer to know
How old Cal Beaver he resided long ago
In a mud'n puncheon cabin on the banks o'
Bitter Crik
With his second wife, called Jinny, kinda
droopy like'n sick.
With a gee, Buck, haw, Buck dumpty diddle
dee,
His buckskin leggins flappin' down around
his knee.

He had a swarm o' young ones, they wuz
wild as ary quail,
A rifle 'n a dipper-gourd a hangin' frum a
nail;
A pair o' bronco milkin' cows some ornry
sheep'n goats,
A span o' wild cayuses n' a bunch o' squeal-
in' shotes.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

A dozen brindle hounds would come a
yelpin' when he'd yell,
'N when they had a old coon treed it sure
were merry hell.
He fed on plug tubaker frum his childhood's
early morn,
'N loved his jug o' likker made uv lightnin'
juice 'n corn.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

He shied at any sort o' toil, wuz easy overhet,
But he could swing the gals all night at ev'ry dance—yuh bet;
The preachers wuz his pizen though he'd bid 'em "light 'n tie,"
Fur they talked religion while they et his Jinny's "pone" 'n "fry."
With a gee, Buck, etc.

He didn't have no neighbors closeter than a mile 'r so,
Fur it peeved him when he heard another feller's roosters crow.
He "savvied" owls 'n all the "signs" fer weather, luck 'n sich,
Frum markin' calves 'n cuttin' corns to bein' "water-witch."
With a gee, Buck, etc.

His biggest gal, Lucindy, she wuz pink 'n white 'n tall,
'N purty as a limb o' peaches hangin' by the wall;
She loved a feller down the crik, the same wuz Buck McGee,—
The opposite uv her old dad, which were the rub, yuh see.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

He wore store clothes 'n slicked his hair, 'n didn't drink nur chaw,
'N loved Lucindy fit tuh bust, but couldn't please her paw.

So they determined for to wed, her pap a sayin' "no,"
'N live forever to the tune uv "Rosin on the Bow."
With a gee, Buck, etc.

They waited till the "sign wuz right" 'n Cal were limber drunk,—
The night the crazy Chinymun lone-handed skun the skunk—
He skun it smilin' to hisself: "Him belly good," he sed,
While th' air in that vicinitee grew yaller, green 'n red.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

'N while Cal nursed his jug that night "to take away the taste,"
Buck vamoosed with his lady love, which likewise wuz in haste.
Some thirty mile away they roused a preacher out o' bed
Who married them in gospel shape,—Lucindy blushin' red.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

Now listen to my narrative 'n hearken to my song,
As things begin to limber up'n mosey right along,
Fer Cal, when he were sobered some, 'n found his angel child
Had dared to flee with Buck McGee, he sartinly wuz riled.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

But first he quenched his burnin' thirst, he
sure did likker up,
Then ripped 'n tore like sum old boar 'r
hydrefobious pup;
His langwidge was sulfurius, n' cum with
such a rush,
That Jinny 'n the kids they scooted pronto
fer the brush.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

He saddled up a "pinto bronc," 'n cinched
him on his gun,
His rifle crost the saddle-horn, 'n then
away he skun,
A snortin' hell'n burnin' flames, his hair a
streamin' free,
'N yellin' as he pelted by, he'd "git that
Buck McGee."
With a gee, Buck, etc.

He used the quirt at ev'ry jump, a humpin'
right along,
A moanin' 'n a grievin' hard 'n thinkin' uv
his wrong;
'N sorta bellerin' to hisself: "I've lost my
darlin' child,
By Buck McGee, so cruelee my daughter's
bin beguiled."
With a gee, Buck, etc.

But when he cum where they wuz at, the
sun a shinin' bright,
Lucindy met him at the door and helped
him to alight:

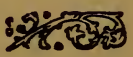
"It's over, paw, we're married now, yuh
might as well agree,
There hain't no call fer shootin' irons,—I'm
Missus Buck McGee."
With a gee, Buck, etc.

Then: "Howdy, pop, shake hands," says
Buck, "your lovely daughter there,
I chased her on the level, Cal, I roped her
on the square;
Cum, rinse your tusks, yuh old galoot, 'n
eat along with us,
Yuh leather-bellied crokydile, yuh pizen-
spittin' cuss."
With a gee, Buck, etc.

Which were a friendly sort o' talk that Cal
rejoiced to hear,
'N so he ceased his bitter moan 'n dried
the drippin tear;
Lucindy meanwhile tellin' them the vittles
they wuz hot,—
Corn pone n' sweet putaters fried, n' rabbit
in the pot.
With a gee, Buck, etc.

'N when Cal hit the trail fer home, beneath
the meller moon,
He felt at peace with all the world 'n
hummed a old dance toon;
'Twere mighty good to hear his hounds a
yelpin' at the door,—
'N so, goodnight to one 'n all, fer there
hain't nothin' more.

With a gee, Buck, haw Buck, dumpty diddle dee,
His buckskin leggins flappin' down around his knee.



To the Folks Back East

WHEN it's ten degrees below,
And you're shoveling at the snow,
We have eighty in the shade, out here:—
When the blizzard 'round you roars,
We are dining out of doors,
And the mocking birds are singing, loud and clear.

When you sit upon the stoves
We are in our orange groves,
Plucking golden apples of Hesperides:
Roses blooming everywhere
Shed their incense on the air,
While you cough and shiver, snuff and stamp and freeze.

Better sell a bunch of shoats
Or a stable full of oats,
Buy a ticket for this sunny land of ours;
Leave the cruel sleet and snow,
Come where our soft breezes blow
Over leagues of orchard drifted deep with flowers.

The Market Place in Puebla

I KNOW the markets well, of every land,
From Niji-novgorod to Samarkand;
Ireland, Spain, France, old England, Turkey, Greece,
Their spuds, oil, wine, ale, harems, bad police;
So picturesque, quaint, curious, gaily vile,—
But Mexico shows yet a different style.

If you the Puebla market place would see,
My gentle tourist friend, please follow me;
Tread in my steps, cling to my hand, and hear
The stunning babel rise, but have no fear.

Wide, high and long, the market place you view,
With a thousand different smells, and each one new;
A thousand husky voices raised on high,
That split the very rafters of the sky!
Things never known, but in a hideous dream
Are all about you, yet you must not scream.
On every side the simple booths we find,
Stocked with the goods that suit the public mind:—
Bottles, cheap combs, clay pots and looking glasses,
Ribbons and laces for the Indian lasses;
Horrific ballads a centavo each,

And dolorous tales to make the women
screech;
Such as were hawked in London's streets
we guess,
Under the merry rule of good Queen Bess;
Herbs, powders, roots and armadillo shells
Potions and plasters, and elusive smells,
Brooms, brushes, ropes, metates and petates,
Ollas, and jarros, and huge tompiates.
Gay handkerchiefs and strings of gilded
beads,
And catechisms for the Indian's needs;

Coffins, salt fish, wax candles, strings of
onions,
And holy oils to cure your warts or bunions.
Straw hats, white cotton shirts and pan-
taloons,
Pineapples, peanuts, and cheap, red bal-
loons;
Rebozoes, blue and striped, peppers, babies;
And mangy curs, flea gnawn, that hint of
rabies;
Potatoes, piñas, turkeys, melons, rice,
And pious, whining beggar, hunting lice,
Who begs you for the love of gracious
heaven,
To share with him what God to you hath
given;
Shows his shrunk limb or loathsome sore
and prays
The Virgin's blessing on you all your days;
Fondas all redolent of that sweet ragout.
Mole with turkey; heavenly Mexic stew;

Bare-legged "Minnehahas," all forlorn,
With linen sadly scant, and soiled, and worn
Fried bovine entrails, sheep's heads boiled and baked;
And as a proof the latter are not "faked,"
Patches of wool remain, the eyes stand out
From the grim, grinning skulls—no room for doubt.
Great heaps of corn in purple, blue and white;
Skins full of pulque, the peon's delight;

Vociferous parrots, gourds, and flowers and honey,
And there a bawling child has lost its money.
"By gosh, it smells, and looks, and is so funny,"
So says the gaping tourist, wonder eyed,
Whirled hither, thither, on the eddying tide;
And while a thousand voices scream their wares,
Blue-nosed Penobscot coughs, and snuffs and stares.

But now the ancient junk shop comes in view;
Rejoice, oh tourist, but be wary, too;
The bright-eyed junk man, though of foreign speech,
Knows all the modern arts that thou wouldst teach;
Retreat, advance, roll up his eyes and shrug

His shoulders o'er some "Maximilian rug;"
Sigh, swear and lie, with hand upon his heart;—
The Puebla junk-shop man well knows his part.
But cast we now our eyes about the room,
Where sits the junk man in his odorous gloom;
Old bottles, soldier caps, tin cans and spurs,
Screws, nuts, bolts, locks, keys, chains, and feline furs,
Old broken watches, clocks, fly-speckled books;
Torn Guadalupe chromos, halters, hooks,
Frying-pans, fiddles, false money, monkey-wrenches;
Jewsharps, accordeons, and opera wenches
In dirty photos; brass rods, shovels, leather,
Tooth brushes, combs, syringes—all together.
Bottles of medicine, but minus label:—
Buy, use them, live thereafter, if you're able;
Stuffed birds, skulls, almanacs, and keyless locks;
Candlesticks, cartridges and old odd socks;
Old flint-lock pistols, pewter spoons, false hair,
Old wigs, bird cages, and sword-blades are there;
Umbrella ribs, saints headless, bullets, belts,
Tea pots, pope's pictures, spittoons, and the pelts

Of goats, old saddles, bridles, broken toys,
Such are the junk man's riches,—tourist's
joys.

But he who kens the secret of the maze;
Skilled in the devious and dark winding
ways,
Oft times will chance upon a treasure rare,
Half hidden in the dust and darkness there.
Some fat old tome in yellow vellumed gold,
In Gothic letter, redolent of the mold
Of cloister cell, and those dim, vanished
years
Of Aldine, Plantin, and the Elzevirs.

La Casa de Contenta

LA Casa de Contenta
Is by a shady way,
Where flowers bloom and glad birds sing
Through all the long bright day.

The peaks, like brown Franciscans,
Their benedictions shed,
Where Casa de Contenta
Uplifts its humble head.

Here oft the idle breezes
Will pause awhile to play
With butterflies and thrushes
On many a blooming spray.

Here shadows cool and quiet
Their arms about us fold,
Where apricots their boughs bend down
With fruit of nugget gold.

La Casa de Contenta
Is like the wild bird's nest,
Safe hidden from the careless throng
Or idly curious guest.

But for the friends who find it,—
And many such there are,—
La Casa de Contenta
Hath neither lock nor bar.

But ever words of welcome,
And ever kindly looks,

And ev'rywhere, like healing balm,
The ministry of books:

Till he who tarries lingers,
And lingering still would stay,
In Casa de Contenta
Forever and a day.

Our Margaret

HER willing little hands are still,
Her eager little feet are cold,
And mingled with earth's ancient mold,
Her loving heart is dumb and chill.

But surely our dear Margaret
Who left us long, long years ago,
Is living somewhere still we know,
Though much is mystery to us yet.

Though wild birds sing above her head
And o'er her breast white roses bloom,
In some far distant radiant room
Our little Margaret's steps are led.

By some fair river's silver flow
She listens to the nightingale
And thinks on us,—she cannot fail
To think on those who loved her so.

Day Dreams

LIKE music of a fountain in the forest
Remembrance of the day returns to me
When, underneath the oaks, with my beloved
I carved our names upon an anicent tree.

The deep, green glade was languorous with Summer;
Down from the hillside's thick-set chappa-ral
Came sadly sweet the wood dove's plaintive mourning,
A sentinel quail's insistent, clamorous call.

Stilletto-like the vexed cicadas' chirping
Shrilled piercingly; o'erhead a lone hawk screamed
Then silence,—till we heard the forest breathing;
So still it was we were as those who dreamed.

Aye, dreamers were we, dear, that day together;
Dreaming of all the wondrous years to be;
Years filled with glowing pages, love indited,
In gold and purple writ, by you and me.

What visions splendid then were ours, my darling,
The cloud-built castles of a love-lit day;

A brief space gleaming with the hues of heaven,—
Too soon but mist and dripping skies of grey,

Our Spanish argosies, all treasure laden,
Breasting the shining seas with silken sails,
Long since have sunk beneath the clashing billows,
Whelmed by the bitter fog and whistling gales.

The wrinkled oak that heard our vows, is fallen,
The woodland path amid the friendly trees,
Where long we lingered hand in hand, is vanished;
All's gone or changed, save you—and memories;

Save you, sweetheart, save you, my bonny Helen,
Save you, dear wife, true comrade all the way;
All else may go so I but hold you, changeless,
Your heart to mine, forever, come what may.

Hand in Hand

COME sit by me, my own true love,
In the soft firelight glow,
And let me hold your hand in mine
As in the long ago:
Together hand in hand, my dear,
As in the days of yore,
When all your years were scant sixteen,
And mine were but a score.

Your brown hair then was rippling gold,
Your cheeks were like the rose;
Your laughing eyes like pools of light,
Where deep, still water flows.
Your dewy lips like honey-combs,
Your hands so soft and white,
Your voice was melody to me,—
You were my life's delight.

Your heart was true, your vows were few,
But oh, so deep and sure;
Your radiant love like lily buds,—
So virgin chaste and pure.
And when you gave your lips to me,
That shining April day,
It linked our lives together, love,
Forever and for aye:

Forever and for aye, sweet wife,
Come shadow or come shine,
The wonder of that mystic hour
Shall thrill this heart of mine.
Not two score years have dimmed the glow,
Nor brushed the bloom away;—
I loved you then, I love you now,
My sweetheart still, today.

The Ship of Good Fortune

A FAIRY ship is sailing,
A sailing o'er the sea;
Ta-ka-ra Bu-ne, lucky ship,
To bring good gifts to me.

In quaint Japan, whenever
Ta-ka-ra Bu-ne comes
Old men and boys make merry noise
And pound their peach-wood drums;

The maidens, crowned with blossoms,
Soft voiced as summer's breeze,
With song and play dance all the day
Beneath the cherry trees.

For in that ship of Fortune
The Seven Kind Gods are seen,
In cloth of gold and silver dressed
And silks of wondrous sheen:

Eb-i-su, god of plenty,
With whom there is no lack,
A basket crammed with crimson fish
Is slung upon his back.

Dai-ko-ku, lord of riches,
Shakes from his magic maul
Bright golden coins and children try
To catch them as they fall.

Ben-zai-ten, Queen of Beauty,
Sits on her dragon chair;

In one fair hand the key of love,
In one a jewel rare.

And there Fu-ku-ro-ku-jin,
His wrinkled head so tall;
With staff and crane and magic fan,
The wisest god of all.

Bish-a-mon, god of glory,
For whom the warriors fight,
His lacquered armor shines afar,
His spear a beam of light.

With snow-white beard, Ju-ro-jin,
The god of long life, he;
With mitred cap and crooked staff,
A tortoise at his knee.

The children's god is Ho-tei,
With bursting bag of toys,
The fattest, jolliest god of all;
Who loves the girls and boys.

Come quickly, ship of fortune,
Across the dark blue sea;
Spread wide your silken silver sails
And waft good gifts to me.

For earth is full of dying
And bloody tears and pain;
Oh! come, bright fairy ship and bring
Our childhood's heart again.

When Elsie Sings

WHEN Elsie sings, the shadowed room
Becomes a bower of wild-rose bloom;
We hear faint whisperings of trees,
The mellow hum of golden bees,
The glad birds warbling in the glen,—
It's Springtime in our hearts again
When Elsie sings.

When her pure voice is lifted high
We see the white clouds sailing by,
The joyous lark and bobolink
In raptures by the river's brink,
And lovers straying hand in hand
Through the green lanes of fairlyland,—
When Elsie sings.

Her voice, like some rare golden key,
Unlocks the gates of memory:
Till precious things from vanished years
Shine through a mist of sudden tears,—
The secret treasures of the heart,
Life's hidden, hallowed, better part,
When Elsie sings.

Dear faces smile on us again;—
We hear the tramp of marching men;—
The voice of prayer, the hymn of praise,
Float up from old plantation days,—
While Afton water ripples clear
And Bonnie Doon draws wondrous near,—
As Elsie sings.

It makes the grieving heart rejoice
To hear the sweet lilt of her voice.
Hope's star beams with a brighter ray,
And Heaven seems less far away:—
We almost see before our eyes
The shining hills of Paradise,
When Elsie sings.

Incidental Philosophy

—o—

THE PRECIOUS THINGS OF LIFE

WE start out in life with the idea that if we have but a big enough sackful we can buy the world. Well, there are lots of things for sale in the world, lots of things with a price tag on them. But after we get a little sense we find that after all the most dear and precious things in life are not for sale, are beyond price, and if we ever possess them some one must give them to us freely, gladly and absolutely; otherwise they can never be ours. But many do not believe this, many do not understand this. Blessed are they who believe and understand.

When St. Francis preached to the birds out in the woods, it was because he loved them, calling them his little brothers. And the little birds loved him in return, and fluttered about him, singing and showing their joy at his company. For such is the nature of love: it always gives itself naturally, spontaneously, gladly and freely for something like itself: it never sells itself, nor trades itself, but just gives itself. The counterfeits are for sale and the cheap imitations are priced in all the market places, but love, true, tender, trusting love, does not sell itself ever at any price. Happy the man or woman to whom this truth is known.

After all is said and done, love is the one great tonic, beautifier and rejuvenator. Love is the real fountain of youth, the spring of purest, deepest joy in life. A true lover, who is truly loved in return by his or her mate, is ever young at heart, no matter what the mirror or almanac may say. Time puts no wrinkles in the heart that loves and is loved.

After all the poets and novelists have sung or written on the world's oldest, most universal theme, it will surprise some folks to learn that the truest wisest, most beautiful description of love, was penned by St. Paul, in the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. It should be written in letters of gold, and hung on the walls of our homes, for it is indeed: "The Greatest Thing in the World."

* * *

APPRECIATION

Because we are just ordinary mortals and not angels, we covet appreciation from those who are nearest and dearest to us,—expressed appreciation that we can feel, and hear and cherish. We get no good from the kisses on our tombstone, from the loving words uttered over our unresponsive dust. Fathers and mothers, wives and husbands, sons and daughters, so often wait and long for the expressed appreciation that never comes until too late to do any good.

Sometimes we receive some sort of a gift

that represents a money value, but that is not what we want, we want something from somebody's heart. If, when things go wrong, or the way is rough and our sky is overcast, the right person should just say to us in the right way: "I do appreciate you, I'm glad I have you, and I just could not get along without you," it would help so much. It would freshen our heart, revive our courage, clear our sky, put a song in our soul and add years to our lives. Just a little honest, heart-born, expressed appreciation, is better than remorse later on.

* * *

ART AND HURRY

I know a man, plain and unpretending, who can produce wonderfully artistic and beautiful things if you give him a few pieces of lumber, a few tools and lots of time,—if you don't stand over him cracking a whip, telling him to "hurry up that art stuff." For art cannot hurry, must take its own time and express itself in its own way. Art is as independent as an oak-tree, that must develop slowly along the lines of its own nature. We still admire and copy and treasure the fragments of artistic work that remain from those long gone years when the worker was unhurried at his task. But who will care for the fragments of the cheap and hideous stuff we turn out now in carload lots, hurriedly, boastfully. Hurry is the enemy of art and the foe of real

beauty in all the world's workshops. The perfect processes of Nature are unhurried.

* * *

THE LANGUAGE OF KINDNESS

When St. Francis preached his sermon to his "brother birds," they did not know what it was all about, nor to what church he belonged. But they well understood one thing and that was that he was kind to them. The language of kindness is understood everywhere. A horse, a dog, a cat, can understand it, and children and women and even men can recognize and understand the speech of kindness, almost anywhere in the world.

Folks may not be able to meet our arguments about religion or points of doctrine, but they can easily tell whether we have any kindness of heart or not. And if our theology of whatsoever brand, does not produce fruit of kindliness, it needs to be taken to the garage and overhauled, for it is only hitting on one cylinder.

How little it means to say of a man: "He was worth a million when he died," and how much it means when we can say: "He was always a kind-hearted man." For as kindness is the essence of true gentility so is it the fundamental principle of all real religion, of all true gentleness of soul.

* * *

VISION

"Where there is no vision the people perish." These words are as true today as

twenty-five centuries ago, in spite of all the Gradgrinds and Bounderbys in the world. The men and women who can see, the seers are ever the light bearers, leaders and saviors of the race. And it is not merely a question of eyes, nor of eye-sight, but goes much deeper than that. It is what makes the difference between the real artist and the photographer, the sculptor and the marble cutter, the builder and the bricklayer—the one merely has eyes, while the other has vision.

And by the possession of vision one becomes a member of the great brotherhood not only of the illustrious dead and living among men, but also of the flowers, trees, rocks, rills, birds, winds, clouds, peaks and stars. Vision is the golden key that unlocks for us the treasures of the universe, hidden in a thousand radiant, jeweled rooms: it is what illuminates the dull drab pages of life's monotonous manuscript with celestial colors, and fadeless beauty. Lord, open our eyes that we may see, give us vision.

* * *

LOVERS AND SWEETHEARTS STILL THOUGH MARRIED

After the honeymoon, the honeyed years; after the bride the wife; after the first, little ripe fruits the glory and richness and wonder of the fruit harvest; when the maiden is a woman and the love-light in her eye in some way blends with the dancing

fire-light of the hearthstone of home. After the blossom broidered honeymoon trail, the long trail together up and down the hills and valleys of real life, in true comradeship, sharing all things, hoping, enduring, rejoicing together in all things all the way. All things, not some things only. Sharing all things gladly, lovingly, unselfishly, habitually, hand in hand, heart to heart, cheek to cheek, eye to eye. Lovers and sweethearts still, though married, through all, in all, in spite of all, yea, because of all that may come. Give others what they will, but give me that.

* * *

CHURCH TAGS

The important thing is not what sort of a church tag you have hanging to you, but are you delivering any goods. If you have nothing but an old church label sticking on you, then get out of the way and don't block up the sidewalk; let the old truck drive up that wants to deliver something. You will need to show St. Peter something more than a beautifully engraved church tag in order to get through heaven's gate, and take a reserved seat inside.

* * *

SENTIMENT

Some people laugh at sentiment, considering it as a sign of weakness. But it seems to me that sentiment is the border of blue and gold and crimson around the pages of life's book, the beautiful illumin-

ated capitals, lighting up and brightening the otherwise dreary and monotonous text.

I am sorry for the man or woman out of whose lives all sentiment has gone,—all of the bird songs, dew-drops and rainbows, all of life's wonder and fairyland.

For when the dream, the vision, the glamour, and all the sweet illusions have vanished, what is left but a hard, dusty highway, under a scorching sky?

* * *

EMPTY FACES

You see them so often—empty faces, dull and vacant as an old deserted house or the clay-bank of a brick-yard. They have eyes, but they see not, ears, but they hear not, neither do they understand.

You see them on the streets, at the moving picture shows, wherever some "barker" is bawling his wares, standing ox-like, staring, gaping, vacantly wondering. And I often think of the drab, dull, barren monotonous lives behind those empty faces, like Markham's "Man With the Hoe." Oh, the pity of it, the commonness of it, the tragedy of it.

* * *

SHORT CUTS

Short cuts are the fashion in these days, short cuts to wealth, health, beauty, knowledge, success and even to heaven. We have books offered that will teach us "Spanish at a Glance," give us "Health Without Any Discomfort," provide an "Easy Method

of Acquiring Wealth," open an "Easy Road to Knowledge," or "A Comfortable and Pleasant Way to Heaven," "Who'll buy, who'll buy?"

But too often the short cut lands one in jail, or the hospital or the asylum or in hell, for it is the testimony of the ages that there is no short cut to any real excellence in anything of worth. We must pay the price in full in some fashion, for there is no achieving of excellence without great labor. Something for nothing is but the dream of a fool or a rascal. As Emerson says: "Step up and take what you will," quoth God, "but first pay the price." The world's superstructure of real civilization rests on great blocks that cost sweat to hew and shape and put in place, brow sweat, brain sweat, yea, at times bloody sweat in silent and awful Gethsemanes.

If your plans for success propose to avoid and eliminate all honest sweat by means of some short cut, you will fail and fall. Only those whose brows are wet with honest sweat have the right to sit at the king's table, for that is the seal of their sonship and the badge of their royalty. There is no short cut to a place in the Hall of the Immortals.

* * *

CHEERFUL SAINTS

As Saint Francis trudged along the roads of Italy he sang a great deal, and was a very cheerful sort of a saint,—which is the

best kind to be if you are thinking of going into that business. As someone has well said:

"We all are weary travelers along
Life's dusty way.
If any man can play the pipes, in God's
name let him play."

Some of the saints whom I have met do not seem to be very hilarious over it; it seems to be a very doleful and melancholy business for them to be good, and some of them are about as cheerful company as an old crock of buttermilk. The only way they can be happy in heaven will be to get off in a corner and put up a screen and be miserable together. They think they have religion when it is only indigestion.

* * *

When we look back over our lives most of us find many things to regret, but we are never sorry for having brought gladness to a child's heart. It costs so little and it often means so much, to give pleasure to a little child.

* * *

He who wrongs and deceives you may think he is harming you, but somehow he alone is truly harmed, and his evil returns on his own pate, for, as St. Augustine says: "In all the universe, nothing can truly harm me except my own self."

THE HURRYITIS

Some have appendicitis, bronchitis, tonsilitis, or meningitis, but they are as naught in comparison with those who are afflicted by that peculiarly American ailment—the hurryitis. It is because of that trouble that we are increasing the number of our hospitals, asylums, sanitariums, sanitoriums, rest cure establishments and cemeteries from Maine to California,—because of the little old American hurryitis.

When the doctor makes out the certificate he does not use the word hurryitis, but "words of learned length and thundering sound," to excuse the size of his bill. But if he should put down the simple truth he would often say: "Another case of the hurryitis. That is what has brought him to the hospital, asylum, or undertakers so long ahead of time."

When the hurryitis gets a good grip on a fellow, he will begin to talk to himself and others something in this fashion: "Well, I'm going to get mine while the getting is good, and I'm going to get it now. I'm not going to be fifty years about it as grandad was, he was too slow, I'm going to show the folks a few wrinkles and fill my sack in a hurry. And I'm going to get some of the other fellow's pile, too, if he doesn't look out, for I'm going to work while he's asleep. I don't intend to sleep any on the job. And I'm going to work while he's off on a vacation, for I intend to cut out all vacation

foolishness. I'm just going to fill my sack as soon as possible, tie her up good and tight, hang a few joy-bells on me, and have a good time for a long while."

Which is certainly a fine and dandy program. But just about that time something pops inside of him. The next day he goes to the doctor and says: "Doc, I've unexpectedly busted something inside of me. I can't get at it to see what it is, but you put the X-ray on me and tell me what the trouble is. I've got the price, so hurry up and stick a new thing in me and let me get back on the job, for I have a lot of important business waiting for me at the office."

The doctor puts the X-ray on him, and then shakes his head as he hums and haws and taps his nail with his gold-rimmed eyeglasses, and says to him: "My friend, I'm very sorry to inform you that I have no extra parts like the one you broke. There was only one and you've smashed it. What made you do it? Didn't you have any sense? Did you think you were made out of cast-iron inside, or built like an ostrich or an alligator? Why, man, you haven't any more sense than a bull-dog. A bull-dog just has brains enough to take hold and hang on, he doesn't know enough to let go. Why didn't you let go once in a while and go a fishing?"

And the man answers: "Well, Doc, you see I was in a hurry to get my sack full, and

I was afraid that if I let go for a while the other fellow would get some of mine while I was gone."

"Well, I'm sorry," says the doctor, "but you're through now, you're done, you're nothing now but a piece of scrap iron. I may be able to patch you up so you can wobble along for a time on one cylinder. But your good days are over, because you didn't know enough to let go once in a while and go a fishing."

And the man goes out looking down the end of his nose, and has forgotten all about the little joy-bells, and begins to live on a prune and a cracker a day. This is no fairy story, so beware of the hurryitis. It's a good thing to know when to take hold and hustle; but it shows just as much gumption to know when to let go and go a fishing.

Post Tenebras Lucem Spero

THE tides of life will thunder as before,
The ancient riddles still remain unread,
When I am with the unresponsive dead,
Lapped in a seamless silence, evermore,

But, when I've gone the way of all the earth,
Down to the voiceless chambers of the dust,
When men have judged me, as they will and must,—
Oh, may there be of charity no dearth.

I would that for a little space at least,
A few brief days, some hearts might think of me;
For my sake drop one tear of memory
As they sit down to life's recurrent feast.

And yet, I would not have them grieve for me,
Nor dim the gladness of one golden day,
Nor cease the shuttling of their work and play
When from the wheel unshackled I am free:

Free, then, to roam the chartless fields of space;
To learn the myst'ries of the morning stars;
The secrets locked behind celestial bars;
Perchance to meet the Maker, face to face!

For there are things that I have longed to know,—
Unanswered questions from the book of Job;
Dim hieroglyphs about Creation's robe;
Vague footprints of the gods of long ago.

Yea, I have dreamed that when the fetters fall
That bind me to this blindly whirling wheel,
I might begin to nearer see and feel
Something of life's stupendous, endless All!

Swifter than light to pass through ether air,
Back to the fountain heads whence all hath sprung,
See gods at work as when the sea was young;
Be of the gods myself, somehow, somewhere.

But nearness is not knowledge, in all things:
The slow ant crawling o'er the pyramid
Sees naught of Rameses nor works he did;
The swallow skims the lake on flashing wings,

But what to her the gulfs that lie below?
So, when this weary wheel at last shall cease,
And I perchance have won to Betelgeuse,
Still comes the question: can I surely know?

Will I be I and rise to such great height,
  Striding amid the stars, all unafraid,
  Viewing them but as pots the Potter made,
Whose refuse shards gild the dread comet's flight?

Radiant, serene, shall I with level eyes
  Behold the angel of Apocalypse
  Gather the clashing seas with all their ships
Back to the secret cisterns of the skies?

Like calls to like: we cannot understand
  What lies beyond that birthplace of the tomb,
  Nor what awaits us in that other room.
But God will take his children by the hand

And lead them in a way they have not known,
  By paths of splendor they have never dreamed,
  And show them whence His quenchless glory streamed
From clustering suns about His love-borne throne.

So, when my tired eyes have lost their light,
  And I am gone the old, old way,—alone,
  Grave then these sturdy words upon my stone,
"*Post tenebras nunc lucem spero*"—write.

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